COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Helping leaders identify their goals and prepare to meet them

At the Cutler Institute, we work with a wide range of communities, from public schools to health institutions to tribal organizations. We bring deep experience in a variety of practice areas to help organizations and systems address intractable issues, encouraging engagement across silos and barriers. We believe in helping people and groups build on their existing strengths and capacities, so we take the time to truly understand the community’s culture, assets, and challenges.

Our areas of Community Engagement expertise include collective impact, collaboration tools, community asset mapping, social media, group facilitation, tribal-state relations, and racial and ethnic equity. Our staff grounds its work in trust and respect for our partners, helping them arrive at their own solutions. We frame questions in ways that move people toward thinking more deeply about their issues, answering them creatively, and telling their own stories in their own language.

How we work with our partners

- Evidence-based research to improve their programs.
- Convene/translate within and across organizations, systems, and communities to frame issues, build a common vision, and find solutions.
- Learn about organizations and communities and help them learn about one another.
- Identify and engage critical partners for any initiative.
- Engage leaders, staff, and stakeholders in evaluating community change efforts.

A SUCCESS STORY: Systems Change Initiative in Portland, Maine Public Schools

Funding Partner: Nellie Mae Education Foundation

In December 2013, the Cutler Institute was selected as the Lead Community Partner for the Nellie Mae Education Foundation’s District Level Systems Change Initiative in the Portland Public School District. The District’s work involves restructuring education at the three public high schools to emphasize student-centered learning. Grant collaborators in Portland include the Portland Public School District, Jobs for Maine’s Graduates, and LearningWorks. The Cutler Institute serves as the “backbone” organization, building capacity and public demand for meaningful parent, youth, and community engagement within and outside of District decision making. Historically underserved or marginalized groups are now part of the dialogue within these educational communities.
At the Cutler Institute for Health and Social Policy, we are dedicated to developing innovative, evidence-informed and practical approaches to pressing health and social challenges.

Our more than 130 experienced staff take pride in our collaborative partnering with clients throughout the nation, from state and federal agencies to the private sector. With advanced degrees and decades of experience in areas of policy, social work, law, education, business administration, and public health, the Cutler Institute’s staff provide global, multidisciplinary approaches and resources to complex issues.

Using research and policy analysis, training and technical assistance, as well as program development and implementation, the Cutler Institute’s practical approach helps to translate best practices into everyday practice for government and community agencies.

Our primary research areas include children, youth, and families; disability and aging; justice policy; and population health and health policy.

Our staff are committed to working closely with each client – no matter the scope of the project – to examine the root of an issue and provide sustainable solutions that help leaders and organizations further their mission and vision. This scope of services and attention to both client and community solutions is unique to the Cutler Institute.

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